

Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan – Basic Plan
Emergency Support Function #11

Emergency Support Function – No. 11
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Primary Agency:

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

Support Agencies and Organizations:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
- Department of General Services (DGS)
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
- Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)
- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)
- Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine
- Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VVOAD)

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources supports local authorities and the efforts of other state agencies to provide nutrition assistance; control and eradicate, as appropriate, any outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease, or any outbreak of an economically devastating plant pest or disease; ensure the safety and security of the commercial food supply; protect natural and cultural resources and historic properties; and

provide for the safety and well-being of household pets during an emergency response or evacuation situation.

Scope

ESF #11 includes five primary functions:

- A. Providing nutrition assistance: Includes determining nutrition assistance needs of disaster victims, obtaining bulk food supplies, arranging for delivery of the supplies, and authorizing disaster food stamps.

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- B. Responding to animal and plant diseases and pests: Includes implementing an integrated Federal, state, and local response to either an outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease, or an outbreak of an economically significant plant pest or disease. Ensures, in coordination with ESF #8 (Public Health and Medical Services) and the DGIF, that animal, veterinary, and wildlife issues in natural disasters are supported.
- See VDACS Policy and Procedure 7.4, Highly Contagious Livestock or Poultry Disease Emergency Operations Plan and 7.5, Response to Plant Pest Emergency.
- C. Ensuring the safety and security of the commercial food supply: Includes the inspection and verification of food safety in slaughter and processing plants; products in distribution and retail sites; laboratory analysis of food samples; control of products suspected to be adulterated; plant closures; foodborne disease surveillance; and field investigations.
- D. Protection of natural, cultural and historic (NCH) resources: Includes appropriate response actions to conserve, rehabilitate, recover, and restore NCH resources related to the direct affects of a disaster or the actions taken to restore resources affected by a disaster.
- E. Providing for the safety and well-being of household pets: Works in coordination with the Department of Emergency Management, ESF #6 (Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services); ESF #8 (Public Health and Medical Services); ESF #9 (Search and Rescue); and ESF #14 (Recovery) to ensure an

integrated response that provides for the safety and well-being of household pets.

- See COVEOP Support Annex 6 Mass Sheltering Plan, Appendix 2 – Pet Evacuation and Sheltering, and Memorandum of Understanding among VDACS, VDEM and other organizations for the coordination of assistance to pet-owning evacuees, pet-friendly human shelters and facilities that will accept pets in response to the Governor’s declaration of a state of emergency.

Mission

ESF #11 helps-ensure the availability and delivery of food products; food safety; appropriate response to an animal or plant disease or pest; the protection of natural and cultural resources and historic properties; and the safety and well-being of household pets.

Organization

General

- A. VDACS is the primary agency for ESF #11 in the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and is responsible for the coordination of this function, and for the maintenance of this part of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP). Each of the five ESF #11 functions is supported by federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Additional support agencies may be needed to provide the resources to assist with all five ESF #11 functions.
- B. Volunteer agencies and professional organizations play major support roles in ESF #11.

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- The Federation of Virginia Foodbanks, an affiliate of Second Harvest, a national distribution network for donated food, assists local providers with food supplies.
- Representatives from the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies (VFHS), the Virginia State Animal Response Team (VASART), the Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA), and the Virginia Animal Fighting Task Force (VAFTF) work with representatives from the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, VDEM and VDACS to assist localities with the emergency sheltering of household pets and service animals.
- Local historical societies and conservation groups assist with the protection and restoration of cultural resources.

C. The VCE will be the principal organization to assess agricultural damage, designate representatives to serve as members of damage assessment teams, and to communicate with the agricultural community on protective actions and measures in the event of a disaster or catastrophic event.

Specific

- A. Providing food to assist local governments: VDACS and appropriate support agencies will locate food sources and allocate appropriate supplies. Delivery of food will be coordinated through other ESFs.
- B. Animal and plant disease and pest response: VDACS is also responsible for coordinating an integrated inter-

agency response, to include VDH, to an outbreak of highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease, an outbreak of a harmful or economically significant plant pest or disease.

VDACS addresses animal health issues in coordination with ESF #8, veterinary medicine associations, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and other agencies.

- C. Ensuring the safety of the commercial food supply is a responsibility shared by VDACS and VDH. VDACS regulates retail food stores, some food processors and storage facilities, and VDH regulates restaurants and some food processors. Following a disaster, these agencies will ensure that areas impacted by the disaster are a high priority for the food safety inspections and verifications required by law.
- D. Protection of natural, cultural and historic resources. These responsibilities are assigned to several departments: protection of endangered species is shared by VDACS and DGIF, natural heritage preservation is the responsibility of DCR, air and water quality are protected by DEQ, DCR and VMRC, and DHR protect cultural and historic resources. DGS is responsible for maintaining some state-owned historic facility resources in Capitol Square. All actions in response to disasters, including those to protect rivers, streams and facilities, repair and restore damaged structures, or to modify the built or natural environment must be monitored by the ESF #11 agencies that have oversight responsibilities for those facilities. During the recovery period, these agencies collaborate with federal agencies at the JFO to coordinate protective actions.

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- E. Providing for the safety and well-being of household pets is primarily a VDACS responsibility. VDACS is supported by VDEM and other organizations through memoranda of understanding. The primary focus is the sheltering of household pets during an emergency.

Concept of Operations

ESF #11 staff will respond to the VEOC when an incident threatens to disrupt the routine protection of the food supply and distribution systems, or cause animal and/or plant disease outbreaks, or endanger animal health, or endanger historic, cultural or natural resources, or endanger the safety and well-being of household pets. ESF #11 will implement standard procedures and coordinate actions to assist local governments.

A. Provision of nutrition assistance

1. A catastrophic or major disaster will deprive substantial numbers of people access to food and/or the means to prepare food. The food supply and distribution network will be interrupted until roads are cleared and power is restored. Without power, many commercial cold storage and freezer facilities will be inoperable and much of the existing food supply inventory may be destroyed.
2. Disaster education initiatives by state and local government agencies and voluntary organizations will advise the public to stockpile food and water supplies sufficient for their household for 5 to 7 days. Residents in a disaster area must be prepared to care for themselves until the normal food supply and distribution system has been restored or supplemental food supplies have been brought in.
3. During the increased readiness period, ESF #11 will develop estimates of the number of people who will need food based on damage projections.
4. The earliest situation reports and damage assessments will indicate the level of immediate human needs including food, and the condition of the infrastructure including the transportation system and the power grid.
5. VDACS will assist affected local governments as needed with the provision of essential food supplies to mass care facilities. Such assistance will include locating items and making them available and ensuring pick-up and delivery through other ESFs. This assistance will be provided only during that period when local governments are unable to manage on their own due to disaster effects.
6. After the delivery of food supplies to the disaster area, it will be the responsibility of the receiving local government to secure and distribute these supplies to disaster victims.
7. The delivery of food to victims of disasters is dependent upon food sources, food protection services, transportation resources and food delivery systems. Conditions in the disaster area determine the appropriate methods of delivering food to individuals. Food can be delivered to disaster victims and relief workers by prepared meals in fixed or mobile feeding facilities, by bulk through foodbanks or other volunteer agencies, or by voucher or food stamps through retail establishments.

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8. The Commonwealth of Virginia will not solicit or encourage the donation of food supplies. VDEM will advise local governments to also discourage the donation of food supplies. Providing food from known inventories using established systems and procedures is more efficient than using donated food supplies. Despite efforts to discourage food donations some donations may be received.
 9. Food supplies in the impacted area must be from sources acceptable to VDACS or VDH before they can be used or distributed. This includes donated food, and food services to disaster victims in mobile or fixed feeding facilities.
 10. State agencies that purchase, store, and deliver food as part of their normal operations will cooperate with VDACS in locating and providing surplus food for delivery to the disaster area. These agencies include those which operate food services for their own residential populations (prisons, colleges, hospitals) and those that assist with the distribution of food to local government facilities (schools and health departments).
 11. The Federation of Virginia Foodbanks, their regional and local affiliates, and other volunteer organizations will assist with locating available food supplies and, in coordination with VDACS, arrange for delivery to the disaster area.
 12. State personnel will coordinate with local officials to ensure the ample and timely delivery of essential food supplies. They will assess the effectiveness of the disaster relief food distribution operation and address any problems. VDACS and VDH will assist with restoration of the local food supply and distribution system. Grocery stores and other food outlets should be able to resume normal operations within several days once road access and electric power have been restored.
 13. The Department of Social Services will implement the Emergency Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) when appropriate. This assistance, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, issues benefits to families whose ability to purchase food has been affected by the disaster. In some situations, D-SNAP will also provide additional assistance to current recipients of the regular program as well. These benefits, received via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, are intended for use in retail establishments and therefore are not issued to residents until electric power is restored and retail outlets are open.
- B. Animal and plant disease and pest response
1. VDACS has the primary responsibility for monitoring the incidence rates of animal and plant diseases and pest infestations affecting agriculture.
 2. VDACS has developed procedures to address animal diseases including quarantine, depopulation and disposal activities designed to stop the spread of the pathogen, limit the number of animals that must be euthanized and minimize the affect

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of the disease on people, the economy and the environment.

keep ESF #11 staff informed of actions taken.

C. Ensuring the safety and security of the commercial food supply.

1. A natural or manmade disaster could threaten the safety and security of the commercial food supply. Natural disasters may damage or destroy food storage facilities, cause floods and interrupt electrical power resulting in contamination and temperate abuse of food. Man made incidents may result in food contamination by chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive agents. Fires and food-transporting vehicle accidents may also cause food contamination.
2. VDACS and VDH have trained personnel and plans for responding to natural or man made disasters that may have rendered food unsafe for consumption. The two agencies will coordinate activities to maximize the use of resources. When presented with a food safety or security mission, staff in ESF #11 will contact the VDACS Program Manager, Office of Dairy and Foods or the Program Supervisor for Food Safety and Security. These individuals will coordinate with staff at VDH, plan the response and keep staff in ESF #11 informed. If the mission assigned specifically involves dairy products or meat and poultry products, the VDACS Program Supervisor for Dairy Services or the VDACS Program Manager for the Office of Meat and Poultry Services will be contacted respectively. These individuals will

D. Protection of natural, cultural and historic (NCH) resources.

During the recovery phase of a disaster, care must be taken to protect NCH resources. Personnel with the expertise on NCH resources do not normally staff ESF #11. ESF #11 will either be augmented or a meeting will be called to address protection of a NCH resource. Participants may include DCR, DEQ, DGIF, DGS, DHR, MRC, VDACS and other organizations as appropriate.

E. Providing for the safety and well being of household pets.

VDACS may be augmented by volunteers in ESF #11 and may coordinate with ESF #17 for assistance in identifying staff members and supplies needed to address the safety and well being of household pets. The primary focus will be missions assigned to assist local and state managed pet shelters. Localities are responsible for managing local pet shelters, but may request assistance for additional staff and supplies through the VEOC. VDACS, with assistance from other organizations and individuals, is responsible for state managed shelters. Incident Commanders for state managed pet shelters will seek assistance for additional staff and supplies through the VEOC. Most of these requests will be directed to ESF #11. Guidance and resource lists will be maintained in ESF #11.

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